

GASTON ALIVE

MAGAZINE

HOME | GARDEN | STYLE | FUN | FOOD | HAPPENINGS

DSBG's Largest Exhibition To Date Chinese Lanterns

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Whimsical Painted Rocks

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Refreshing Strawberry Rhubarb Pie

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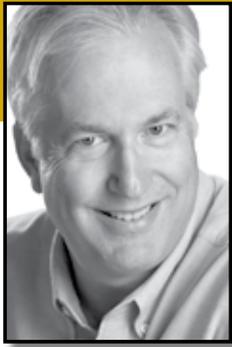
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FROM THE PUBLISHER

It's finally August and the mornings are a little cooler- finally! Before long it will be back to school (and having to wait behind buses if you're late...) dance and karate lessons, and of course, high school bands, football and cheer. But for now a lot of us are trying to get in one more week or weekend at the beach or mountains.

As much as I always look forward to spring, fall has an energy and vitality all its' own. The change of seasons, a little relief from the heat, and the anticipation of the holidays make it a fun time of year.

Be sure to check out all of the fall festivals and also the Chinese Lantern exhibit at Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden that starts September 7th. (See page 6 for more). I'm always amazed at folks who live right here in Gaston County and have never been to the garden-we are so lucky to have such a great attraction so close to us!

Treasure these last days of the summer before it turns into the whirlwind of fall activities.

All the best,
David

featured this month

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CHINESE LANTERNS COME TO THE GARDENS



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WHIMSICAL PAINTED ROCKS-SUMMERTIME FUN!



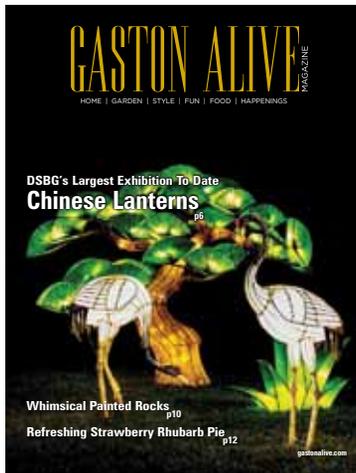
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REFRESHING STRAWBERRY RHUBARB PIE



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on the cover



From Zigong China to Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens in Belmont, the spectacular Chinese Lanterns exhibit opens September 7th. These breathtaking displays are much more than paper and candle lit lanterns of yore. For more information see related article page 6, or go to DSBG.ORG Graphic Cover graphic design by David James, image courtesy of DSBG.

our staff

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By Jim Hofman

CHINESE LANTERNS!

GARDEN HOSTS
LARGEST EXHIBITION
TO DATE BEGINNING
SEPT. 7



Late last month, nearly a dozen artists made the 8,000-mile journey from Zigong in China’s Sichuan Province to Gaston County. They traded Southeast Asia’s humid 92-degree weather for ours, saved a day in their travels and got down to building what will be Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden’s largest exhibition to date.

On Sept. 7, the Garden will open the Chinese Lantern Festival, produced by Hanart Culture, an international touring exhibit that the Garden is turning into an exploration of Asian culture. During the eight-week event, ending Oct. 29, the Garden invites guests to explore dozens of animals of the world in vignettes created from hand-made Chinese lanterns.



The artists may call these “lanterns,” but make no mistake - these are not hand-held, candle-lit lamps. From humble beginnings of silk and paper, the Chinese lantern has evolved into the wondrous shapes and sizes. The Hanart Culture Chinese Lantern Festival has made its way from Dallas, TX.; Calgary, Canada; Vienna, Va., Boca Raton, Fla. and now to our Gardens.

The lanterns produced by Hanart Culture, create an amazing display themed of “The Wild.” Guests greatly enjoy seeing a world of life-size (sometimes larger than life) illuminated panda bears, lions, flamingoes, and more fauna from the world’s seven continents.

Each silk and fabric lantern is made by masters of the craft in Zigong, China’s center



of lantern heritage. Others are made of small glass medicine bottles filled with colored liquid. Arranged in the shape of dragons, peacocks, and giant pearls, the lanterns glimmer like crystal rainbows. Other displays are made from plates, cups and saucers arranged in the shape of playful elephants.

“The theme travels from one city to the next, but we are able to create a unique display for each venue based on its landscape,” said George Zhao, principal of Hanart Culture. “Our team works for weeks creating and lighting all our marvelous vignettes.”

Somewhere in the neighborhood of 800 lanterns—most created from steel frames and fabric and lit from within with LED lights—will fill more than 12 acres.

Living arts further enhance the Chinese Lantern Festival as a group of artists arrives in Belmont just prior to the exhibition’s opening. Garden guests will marvel at Kung Fu shows, savor Asian food and browse the marketplace that features authentic Chinese folk art and crafts. Shadow play, a tradition in China for more than 1,000 years, will also be presented nightly for the great enjoyment of children.



All this is surrounded by the lush Garden featuring an all-new Asian-inspired display that the Garden’s horticulture team installed this spring, and will be in place throughout the year. Japanese maples, bamboo, grasses, iris, ferns and more are pulled together to develop the display that also features other traditional Asian elements such as rock and raked sand. A Bonsai display, presented in partnership with the Bonsai Society of the Carolinas, provides yet another elegant example of Asian culture.

Throughout autumn, the Garden will offer continuing education classes for adults, programs for schools and home schools, guided tours for groups and much more. On Wednesday, Oct. 4 from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. the Garden will hold the Mid-Autumn Festival, a traditional Asian event that celebrates the fall moon. Visitors can enjoy family-friendly activities and sample a traditional moon cake. Mid-Autumn Festival is free with festival admission.

Want to go?

The Chinese Lantern Festival will be held Wednesday through Sunday, from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden, 6500 South New Hope Road, Belmont. Tickets are now available at www.DSBG.org. Visitors can save by purchasing tickets online in advance where tickets are \$21.95 per adult, \$19.95 per senior 60+, \$14.95 per child ages 2 through 12, and free for children under the age of two. If tickets are not sold out for an evening, tickets will also be available at the door for \$24.95 per adult, \$21.95 per senior 60+, \$15.95 per child ages 2 through 12, and free for children under the age of two. Garden members receive a 30% discount on tickets including up to four guests. Please note that the Garden will remain open daily for general admission from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with daytime entry ending at 4 p.m.



*All photos courtesy of Hanart Culture.



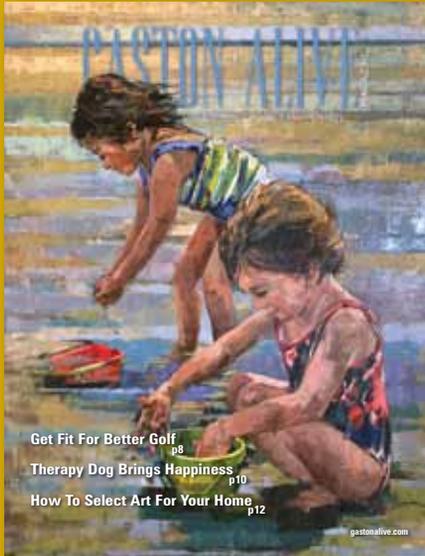
ABOUT HANART CULTURE'S CHINESE LANTERN FESTIVAL

Hanart Culture’s Chinese Lantern Festival is a magical showcase of hundreds of illuminated lantern displays and live Kung Fu shows. The festival is a stunning visual exhibition of Chinese art and culture. Featured attractions also include Chinese Folk Art and Crafts, food, plus interactive Kung Fu and Martial Arts lessons on stage for visitors.

The Chinese Lantern Festival is a production of Hanart Culture.
www.chineselanternfestival.com

The exhibition is sponsored by Duke Energy, WSOC-TV and K104.7.

For more information call 704-825-4490 or visit www.DSBG.org.



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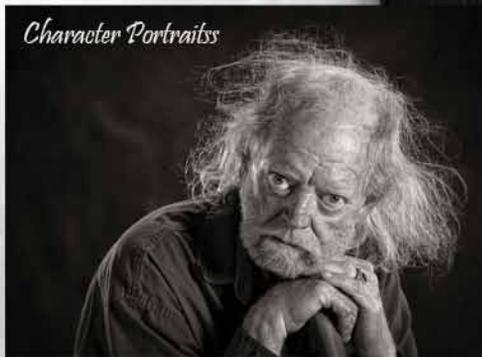
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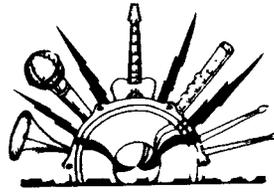


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ROCK ART

By Ben Dungan

ROCKS!



Summer can be a polarizing season. Especially in the Carolinas. You either love the summer, or you hate it. Or you are like me - it changes by the day.

I do love the long days and the slower pace of life. I could do without the extreme heat and humidity, but like most things, when you pick up the stick, you get both ends.

Autumn will be here before you know it. And with it, our routines won't be far behind.

Summer has a predictable rhythm to it. By now, the heat and humidity have all but forced us into our air-conditioned homes. Except for folks like LuAnn Harden.

LuAnn is the creator of the Color Gaston Facebook group. It's mission is to spread a little color around Gaston County, as well as a little happiness and positivity - all in the form of painted rocks.

LuAnn runs just one of the many Facebook groups in our area devoted to this new phenomenon involving the painting and hiding of rocks. Sure it may be a fad. Or it just may be a summertime thing. But it's here, and mothers all over the place are jumping in with both feet. And they're bringing their kids along for the ride.

Everyone is glued to a screen these days. And I mean everyone. But it's the kids I think about the most - many of whom will never know a summer without on-demand television and endless video games. Unfortunately, it's just the world we live in today.

After all, it was Ferris Bueller who warned us that life moves pretty fast. If we don't stop and look around once



in awhile, we could miss it. We could miss out on these painted rocks. And the joy they bring.

It's a simple formula. It starts with painting, you know, an actual rock. With real paint. It's doesn't involve some silly app on your iPad that allows you to paint virtual rocks. You have to actually put the screen down to paint these rocks. And even better - it forces interaction. With real people.

Adults interact with kids and kids interact with adults. I guess we can say that rocks bring people together. Imagine that.

Now technology does play a role in it. And that's OK. But there is a system to this painted rock phenomenon.

You paint the rock, then you hide the rock. Others (hopefully) find it, snap a photo and post that it was found on one of the many Facebook groups. Lastly, you re-hide it for others to find.

LuAnn got the idea to create this Facebook group from her sister who was a member of a similar group in Burke County. LuAnn loved the concept and thought it was a great way to spread a little happiness and positivity in her own neck of the woods - one painted rock at a time.

She started her group at the end of May and invited as many people as she could think of. She kicked it all off by painting and hiding 43 rocks in and



around the Cherryville area. It didn't take long before some of her rocks were found.

Some of those rocks were found by Hayden Stout, a 7-year old boy from Cherryville, on a Sunday night right as the sun was going down.

Hayden was having a bad day prior to finding the rocks, according to his mom, Casey Stout. Hayden's dad was going to have to work out of town during the week for a while, making him only available on weekends.

That's hard thing to understand at seven years old. Especially when you are used to having your dad around. So you can imagine how Hayden felt on that Sunday night when his dad had to leave.

Casey thought LuAnn's painted rock idea would be a nice little distraction for Hayden. So they set out to hunt for the rocks that LuAnn had painted and hidden.

That's the beauty of summer nights. The sun hangs on just long enough so a sad seven-year-old boy can hunt for rocks. Within thirty minutes of their search, Hayden found his first rock over on Main Street in Cherryville. He was thrilled!

He kept looking and looking. Over the course of an hour and a half, he found three more rocks. Hayden was on cloud nine. His mom's plan worked.

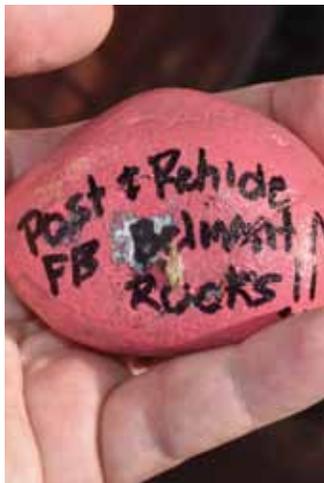
But more importantly, LuAnn's plan worked. Or as she said, "Mission accomplished".

Will painted rocks change the world? No, it won't. Will it make you smile for a moment? You bet.

How do I know? I found my first rock the other day. And I wasn't even looking for it. I guess you can say it found me.

In a world where negativity swirls around so easily, especially in our current political climate, then I'd like to cast my vote for more painted rocks.

If happiness is a painted rock, then I wish for a mountain of rocks and an ocean of stones. All painted. All happy. And for summer to stay just a little bit longer.







COOKING WITH GLENN

FRUITS OF SUMMER

Here in the South we consider watermelon and peaches our fruits of summer. Now I'm a Southerner by choice not birth, so in other places the fruits of summer are different. As a boy growing up in the Midwest and West one of the treats of summer was rhubarb. Its tart bright taste always takes me back to summer and my childhood. Rhubarb isn't really a fruit at all because you cook the stalk (technically known as petioles) but Laura Ingalls Wilder in her book *The First Four Years* calls rhubarb the "pie plant" and in much of the Midwest it is still called pie plant.

Rhubarb is an odd plant, its leaves are poisonous to people but useful in natural pesticides and the stalks are delicious as well as having known cancer fighting benefits. [see side bar] Rhubarb can be hard to find here in the South.

When I found rhubarb in a market one day I snapped up a couple of pounds of the stalks which resemble ruby colored celery. The nice young lady ringing me up said in her Southern drawl 'what is this? I have never seen it before in my life.' At that point I knew I wanted to share a recipe using this delicious treat, but what to do? In some countries they serve the stalk just dipped in sugar or chili powder and salt, although portable it probably doesn't require a recipe.

But what is more Southern than pie, and a refreshing icebox pie in our summer is just the ticket to serve up on a sultry evening. The tangy brightness of the rhubarb paired with fresh strawberries and a dollop of whipped cream set off by a flaky crust is sure to have folks asking for seconds.

INGREDIENTS:

- Rhubarb - about 1 lb of stalks
- Strawberries - 1 lb
- Sugar - 1 cup
- (optionally cinnamon, cardamom and nutmeg)
- Water - ¼ cup
- Pie Crust - Store bought or homemade
- Egg - separated just the white
- Gelatin - 2 envelopes
- Fruit Pectin - package

Method:

Pre-heat your oven and bake the pie shell. I played with a couple of methods and depths, the pie works both as a deep dish as well as a standard depth. On the deep dish... I used pie weights to hold the crust in place and on the standard depth I just pushed the crust into the plate more so it did not shrink as much. Remember to spray your pie plate with a nonstick (I like Bakers Joy) and use a fork to puncture around the base. Bake the shell till mostly done, then remove, paint with the egg white wash (the separated white with a bit of water) and put back in to cook for another couple of minutes. This seals the crust so it will stay crunchier.

While the shell is baking cut the rhubarb into 1 inch cubes simmer with the water and sugar. It will start to break down into a something almost like stew. Don't overcook or all the rhubarb chunks will disappear. Dip 1-2 cups of 'liquid' out of the rhubarb, let cool and use to proof the gelatin and pectin. This keeps it from forming clots vs. pouring directly into the hot rhubarb stew. You can experiment with different spices I put ½ teaspoon of cinnamon, and ¼ teaspoon each of cardamom and nutmeg with just a pinch of salt. Your combination will make your rhubarb pie your secret recipe.

Let the cooked crust cool and add the gelatin/pectin mix back to the main pot of rhubarb, stir in and heat to incorporate. (Sort of like making jam). Let cool to warm but not set then pour into the crust and refrigerate. Clean and slice the strawberries, at this point you can macerate them in some sugar or just use them as is on the cooled pie. I spent time arranging them, but they could just as easily be poured over for that casual devil may care look.

Garnish with some whipped cream and serve.

Till next time, Make it Your Own.
Glenn



RHUBARB'S AMAZING PROPERTIES



Rhubarb is so much more than just a pie plant. The leaves of rhubarb had been used by bee keepers, apiculturists, as a Varroa-icide which kills the mites which often threaten bee colonies.

Rhubarb also contains a compound call Parietin or physcion which is a pigment shown to have anti-fungal properties against powdery mildew and in human tissue it destroys cancer cells.

In laboratory studies Parietin killed half the human leukemia cells and slowed the growth of other human cancers. A more potent derivative called S3 cut lung cancer cells by two thirds in 11 days. Best of all it appears to be non-toxic to health cells.

Now I'm not saying a pie can cure cancer, but in this world where so much is bad for you it's nice to know a great tasting pie is also good for you.

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